

ministry to  
 youth



**FREEDOM**

Writer: Tim Levert  
Project Supervisor: Annie Snyder

Created by Ministry to Youth  
[ministrytoyouth.com](http://ministrytoyouth.com)

# MESSAGE 01



Message 1: Freedom from Sin



Bible Verses: Romans 6:14-18



Bottom Line: Jesus' work on the cross breaks the power of sin in our lives ... so we can choose to obey God and live by the Spirit



Notes: All Scripture references are NLT unless otherwise indicated.

# TEACH

What's up everybody?

I'm so happy to see you all here, and I'm excited to start talking about freedom.

First, what is freedom?

I looked it up on the trusty internet, and I got two definitions:

According to the first definition, freedom is “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.”

Basically, it means you can think, say, or do whatever you want.

The second definition said freedom is “the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved.”

It means you're not in jail or otherwise held against your will.

Usually when you get multiple definitions of a word, it's because there are multiple meanings that are distinctly different.

And usually, the first definition is the main one.

But in this case, I think the second definition is way more important than the first, because you can't have definition one without first experiencing definition two.

Throughout this event, we're going to talk about freedom – specifically spiritual freedom – and what that means for us.

So let me kick things off with a 60-second summary of the whole Bible.

In **Genesis 1 and 2**, God created.

He called everything he created “good,” except he called humanity “very good.”

In **Genesis 3**, humans messed it up and needed help, so God helped.

The rest of the Old Testament is that same pattern over and over: God tells us the best way to live, we ignore him and get into trouble, and God rescues us.

In the New Testament, God shows up as eight-pound-six-ounce baby Jesus.

**Jesus lived to be our example** – He was a perfect reflection of God.

In **Colossians 1:15**, Paul writes that Jesus was, **“the visible image of the invisible God.”**

Jesus lived to be our example, and **Jesus died to be our substitute** – He looked at the mess that we were in and took our place in it.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites sacrificed a lamb to take away the consequence of their sin.

In John’s gospel, John the Baptist understood who Jesus was, and when he saw Jesus walking towards him, John said, **“Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:39).**

In **2 Corinthians**, Paul writes that **“Christ who never sinned became the offering for our sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).**

There was a trade.

Jesus lived to be our example, Jesus died to be our substitute, and **Jesus rose again to break the power of death.**

In **Romans**, Paul writes, **“Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him” (Romans 6:9).**

Through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, sin and death have no power.

We – all of humanity – were imprisoned and enslaved by sin.

It controlled us.

And Jesus set us free – from sin and from death.

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection gave us “the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved” – the second definition of “freedom.”



And now we have “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint” – the first definition.

This is basically what Paul is saying in his letter to the Roman church.

Paul was a guy who had a radical encounter with Jesus, and he became a radical follower of Jesus.

Paul would travel around to different places, telling the story of Jesus and inviting people to be a part of it.

As groups would start believing, Paul would help them get organized so they could meet together to encourage each other.

Then Paul would leave to go to another town and do it all over again.

Sometimes, Paul would write letters back to these groups, explaining things to them or helping them work through issues.

Paul sent one of those letters to the church in Rome, and it’s in our Bible as the book of **Romans**.

Would someone read **Romans 6:14-18** out loud for the group?

*[I love having students read the Bible out loud, but if it doesn’t work for your group, you can have another adult read it.]*

**14 Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.**

**15 Well then, since God’s grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!**

**16 Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.**

**17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.**

**18 Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.**

Thanks for reading that for us.

Isn't that amazing?

Sin is no longer our master – we're free from sin!

How many of you really believe that – that you're free from the power of sin?

Raise your hand if you have a relationship with Jesus.

Keep your hand up if you don't sin anymore.

Don't feel shame about that – you're not alone.

And it's not just us in the 21st century in the United States.

Look at what Paul says just one chapter later, in **Romans 7, verses 15 and 19**:

**15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.**

\*\*\*

**19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.**

Paul, the same guy who said sin is no longer our master, also says he does what he doesn't want to do, and he doesn't do what he wants to do.

If **“sin is no longer [our] master,”** why does Paul – and why do we – still struggle with sin?

*[Optional, depending on how you think your group will respond.]* I'd love to hear your thoughts on that question.

There are two truths at work here:

One, **Jesus broke the power of sin** in our lives, meaning it can no longer control us.

Two, **we have to choose to obey God** to continue experiencing true freedom.

You might be thinking, "If I have to obey God, is that real freedom?"

And I'd be thinking, "Yes!"

We have an understanding of freedom that is entirely self-focused: I want to do whatever I want to do whenever I want to do it.

And we think that's real freedom, but it's not.

That IS a kind of freedom, but it's a false freedom, and it comes with a major problem: we are not trustworthy to use our freedom in the best possible way.

Do you trust yourself to always make the right decision in every circumstance?

Have you ever done exactly what you wanted and gotten a disappointing result?

Have you ever done something that you've regretted?

Have you ever done something that hurt someone you cared about?

When you live in false freedom, that's the risk.

You might make some right decisions, but you never know when the wrong decision will come ... with devastating consequences.

That's the pressure that comes with false freedom.

And Jesus will let you live that way.

He will let you trust yourself to make the best decisions.

But you can also accept the kind of freedom that makes it possible for you to trust and obey God, where you experience a life of peace, joy, and purpose – a life with no regrets, because you're using your freedom to trust and obey God.

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, people could try really hard, but it was impossible to obey God, because sin had power over us.

Because of Jesus, the power of sin is broken, so we can choose to obey God and live by the Spirit.

Let's look at two things Jesus said in **John 15**. This is what He says in **verse 5**:

**"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."**

Jesus set us free so we could remain in him.

**"Remain"** means to stay in close relationship with him, and when we do that, what happens?

We **"produce much fruit."**

Sometimes we overthink that that means – to produce fruit.

In simplest terms, it means we experience God in very real ways.

In terms you've heard before, it means we have love, joy, peace, patience, and so on.

It doesn't mean we don't have difficulties. It means in the midst of them, we know we're not alone, so we still have love, joy, peace, patience, and so on.

It seems like remaining in him is a key to experiencing real freedom.

So how do we remain in Jesus?

What does that look like?

He tells us a few verses later in the first part of **John 15:10**:

**"When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love ..."**

How do we remain in Jesus' love?



By obeying His commandments.

When we choose to obey God – which we are free to do because of Jesus' death and resurrection – we remain in His love and produce much fruit.

Our freedom allows us to know and pursue God.

When we know and pursue God, we are free from the pressure to get everything right all the time – Jesus said He would lead us, and we simply need to trust Him and obey what He says.

When we trust and obey God, we experience true freedom.

So, what will we do with our freedom ... how will we live it out?

That's what we'll talking about for the next few sessions.

In session two, we'll talk about freedom from perfection, from feeling like you have to get it right all the time.

In session three, we'll talk about freedom from performance, from feeling like you have to constantly impress people.

In session four, we'll talk about freedom from shame, from feeling like you're not good enough.

Thanks for hanging in with me! You are some awesome students, and this will be an awesome weekend.